

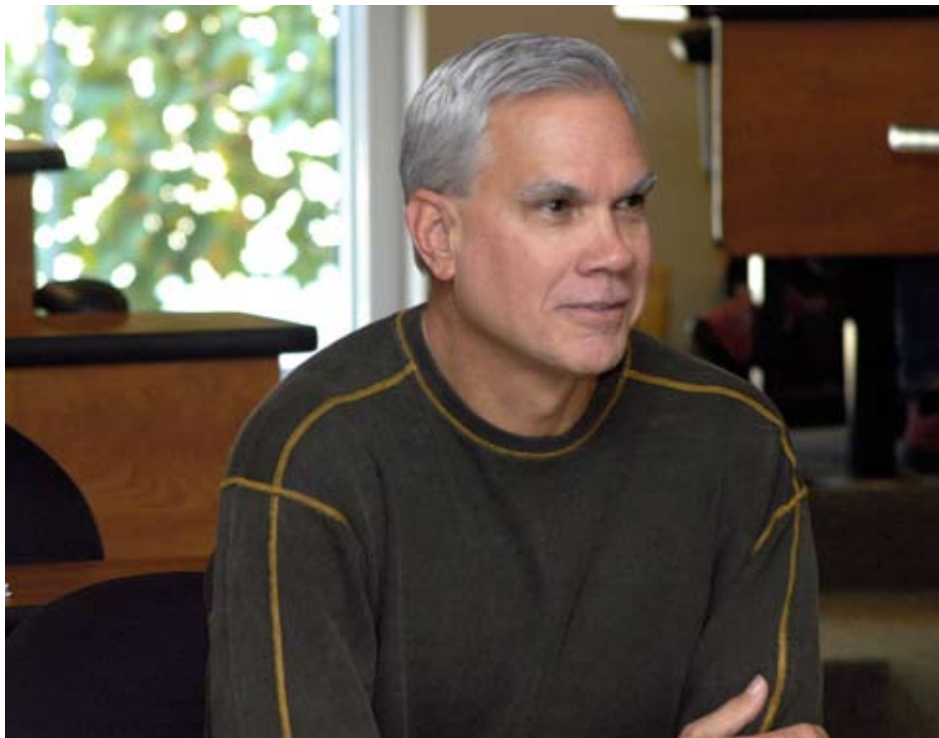
From Patient to Practitioner: Nursing Student Comes Full Circle

In September 2000, Randy Evans 08N was recovering from quadruple bypass surgery at Emory Crawford Long Hospital's Open Heart Unit 21. He was at the lowest point of his life and wasn't sure he'd live to see his daughter grow up. Pursuing a career in nursing seemed daunting. Health crises often create profound changes, however, and Emory would be instrumental in Evans' transformation.

The Road to RN

After recovering, Evans volunteered with Mended Hearts, surgery survivors who encourage recovering heart patients. "It was such a rich experience . . . I wanted more," he recalls. He decided to become a nurse—though at fifty-six, he would be the oldest student enrolled at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing. Another "huge leap" of faith was tackling a science-heavy curriculum. Despite doubts, Evans forged ahead, taking science prerequisites at Georgia Perimeter College. The stakes were high. "They're not interested in Cs at Emory, and they're not particularly interested in Bs," he says. Mastering science galvanized his decision.

For Evans, Emory was a natural. The Decatur resident knew of Emory's status as one of the nation's best nursing schools. Equally important, "I knew age wouldn't be an impediment. Emory has a reputation for being accepting of nontraditional students."



I knew age wouldn't be an impediment. Emory has a reputation for being accepting of nontraditional students. —Randy Evans 08N

Clearing science and age hurdles, he then faced a challenge common to college students—finances. Unlike younger students, he didn't qualify for financial aid, so his family downsized to a smaller home, and his wife, Maria, took sole responsibility for running the family business.

Destined for Nursing

Associate Clinical Professor Sally Lehr, a member of the admission committee, read Evans's entrance essay.

"It was the best I'd ever read. I told everyone, 'I want this person for my mentee,' " she recalls. The Mentor-Mentee Program guides students throughout nursing school.

Evans's passion for nursing impressed Lehr and continues to inspire students and patients. "It's like he was meant to be a nurse," she says, adding, "Patients love him because he understands them." In class, students respect his opinion. The feeling is mutual. "I've learned so much from younger students," Evans said.

If Lehr is impressed with her mentee's character, Evans is equally appreciative. "Sally Lehr is truly a mentor. She'll be a friend for the rest of my life," he said. At one pivotal juncture, Lehr knew Evans was "sweating out" his Medical Surgical grade. She urged the instructor to process the final grade and then called Evans to tell him he had passed.

For Evans, "Nursing school is the most interesting and difficult thing I've ever done." Eight years ago he was a patient on Unit 21; this year, he's a nurse there. When Evans tells a patient, "I've been where you are, and there is life after open heart surgery," one hears gratitude in his voice—a sentiment that's shared by his patients. —Nancy Moreland

For more information about the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing, visit www.nursing.emory.edu.

Emory History and Wiki Projects

Under the general editorship of Vice President and Deputy to the President Gary S. Hauk, the University is planning a major new project that will result in a volume or series of books about the history of Emory. A history Wiki has also been launched that will enable the community to contribute historical entries about Emory. Community members are invited to be involved in both projects.

One section of the project will focus on the faculty and alumni who have made great contributions to Emory and beyond. We seek from the community the names of highly influential, deceased faculty and alumni whom we may commemorate in chapter sections or full chapters. Some chapters will be commissioned from persons with particular expertise in the respective areas under consideration, while others will be written by Hauk and Sally Wolff King, assistant vice president. Members of the Emory community are invited to contact Wolff King at swolff@emory.edu to offer suggestions of those individuals to be commemorated as well as those who are interested in writing chapters about them.

Other portions of the project will focus on histories of important components of the University. These chapters will be organized thematically, with loose



reference to the overarching themes and initiatives of the Emory Strategic Plan, including "Religions and the Human Spirit," "Confronting Race and Difference," "New Frontiers in Science, Technology, and Health," "Preparing Engaged Scholars," and "Creating Community, Engaging Society."

A recently established editorial board of faculty from the various Emory schools, including Law,

Medicine, Business, Nursing, Public Health, Emory College, and Oxford College, will advise on matters crucial to shaping the project and will assist with author and chapter selections.

The working book title is "Where Courageous Inquiry Leads: Studies in the Emerging Life of Emory University."

Emory has also launched Wiki-Emory. The community at large may now log on, access the site, and record memories of Emory. Emory community members are invited to take part in both the new Emory history book and Wiki projects. Access to the Wiki is available at <http://wikiemory.emory.edu>.

For further information, please call 404.727.5789 or email swolff@emory.edu.

Emory Family is a publication of the Emory Annual Fund. For more information, please call 404.727.6200 or email euparent@emory.edu.

Editor	Jane Howell
Graphic Designer	Michael Hooten
Contributors	John Farina, Nancy Moreland, Emily Penprase, Sally Wolff King
Photography	Ann Borden, Kay Hinton, Bryan Meltz, Jon Rou